

Come together:
Why it's good to meet

Reports from

-The Expo

-PodCamp

Preview of
PodcastCon UK



You should be here



ABOUT PODCAST USER MAGAZINE

Each month, our dedicated contributors will review a range of hardware and software to guide you to the right buying choice. We will also review a wide variety of podcasts, bringing you diversity and entertainment from both mainstream and niche.

Advice and help

Podcast User Magazine staff have years of combined experience. So, if you have any problems or would like any information, just email us at the address below. We're here to help.

help@podcastusermagazine.com



SUBMISSIONS

We are always looking for great new talent. So if you have a topic that you would like to write about, please email us at the address below.

We would be glad to hear from you.

submissions@podcastusermagazine.com

COMMENTS

If you have a comment, criticism or even praise for what we do please don't hesitate to let us know. We can't get better at what we do without you!

general.comments@podcastusermagazine.com

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CONTENTS

Editorial	Page 3
News	Page 4
Ask Auntie PUM	Page 6
Podcast Review Roulette	Page 7
Podcast Review Global Voices	Page 10
New Hardware	Page 12
Software - Teleprompt	Page 13
Podcast Expo 2006	Page 15
Impressions of Expo 2006	Page 18
Podcast Con 2006	Page 20
Inside The Podcasters Studio	Page 21
Podcamp	Page 23
Podcasting Proximity	Page 26
SweCasters	Page 27
Mobile Podcasts	Page 28
Mash 2	Page 31
Mark My Words	Page 33
Skinny White Boy	Page 34
Google Reader	Page 35
Richard Vobes	Page 36
Podcast Pickle	Page 39
Podcast Culture	Page 40
The Quirky Podcast List	Page 44
Stop Press	Page 45

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EDITORIAL

Firstly, for all the new readers joining us this month – welcome! Linda and I met a lot of you at the Expo, and I hope you'll enjoy what we do and stick around. If you like it, subscribe just as you do to get a regular podcast. If you really like it, tell your friends, and if you podcast, tell your listeners! That's all we ask.

So, here is Issue 10 – a major step forward for us as we hit double figures. We've taken our first advertisement, but don't worry, we're not going to fill PUM up with adverts. PUM costs money to deliver to you – not much, but it is significant – so we'd like to get some of that back. Our aim is to keep PUM free for all our readers - forever.

I've done a piece on the Expo in my article this month but pulled some things out for this Editorial piece.

One quick take away from Leo Laporte's keynote, during which he made the point of using the word 'net-cast' in place of the Apple-oriented 'podcast'. I really don't think we need another name – the word 'podcasting' is embedding itself nicely in the real world. More names will just confuse the hell out of people. PUM, for one, won't be changing its name.

As I outline in the article, I went to see the Podshow folks at the Sheraton. Nice as it was having a bottle of water in the shade by the pool, I have to ask why Podshow had to have a separate "UNexpo"? It just seemed a little disingenuous to have all this activity in the main Expo and then to drive about 400 yards to the Yah Boo Sucks UNexpo across the road and then back again. Come on, guys – embrace the Expo. Have the biggest stand you can have, but join in!

And from one podcasting expo to another. We're only a few short days away until the small (but perfectly formed) PodCastCon 2006 kicks off in London on November 18th. It's not too late to get involved or to get tickets. If you're in the UK or EU and you didn't get to Ontario, this is a must-do event – come on down!

Enjoy!





We've been discovered by the British press (almost)

Web User Magazine said of Podcast User Magazine . . .

'Dedicated to the latest online phenomemon and the technology that lets you create or download radio shows. The free online magazine is available in PDF format and can be downloaded from the site or delivered directly to your PC using a Podcast Aggregator. It contains news and reviews of the latest software and hardware, along with information on podcasts from around the globe, written in a clear and easy-to-read style'. (We *must have been sober that day then*)



More numbers than you can shake a stick at

Wizzard Software is excited to announce that Switchpod, a leading podcast hosting provider, experienced excellent growth in their monthly podcast download totals for September. Over 1.25 million downloads from www.switchpod.com occurred last month, more than doubling the 600,000 podcast downloads in August. Average downloads for Switchpod were previously estimated to reach 800,000 per month. (Darn, going to need a bigger MP3 player now) <http://www.switchpod.com>

UPDATE : Wizzard has also just bought Libsyn too

We pick the winners, don't we?

Podcast User Magazine writers Phil Clark and Jimmy Hastell wrote a favorable review of Podcast Station in issue 9 (page 21). We are pleased to announce that Podcast Station was voted the 'Winner of Best All Inclusive Podcasting Software at the 2006 Podcast and Portable Media Expo' (honest, we have no influence!)



<http://www.podcaststation.com>



A rose by any other name

Leo Laporte, recently voted as 'Person of the Year in Podcasting' at the Podcast & Portable Media Expo held in California, is on a mission. With Scott Bourne, he is willing to finance an effort to trademark another name for podcasts: "Netcasts." They've agreed to foot an expected \$30,000 to trademark the term. The reasoning behind this move is one of disassociation with Apple and that company's desire to own everything 'Pod'

. Smells just as sweet. <http://www.leoville.com>



Copyright Chuck Tomasi





Wire-less

Logitech introduce the FreePulse Wireless headphones, cordless headphones for MP3 players. Logitech's adapter and headphones are paired during manufacturing so that when they are charged and powered on, they automatically connect. By using Bluetooth 2.0 EDR technology, the headphones can stream large files with greater clarity and less interference, and with the embedded rechargeable batteries, they have a play time of more than six hours on a full charge.

<http://www.logitech.com>

Listen Up

Spyndle.com

(c) 2006 Kreg Steppe



BEING A PODCASTER, BRAD KNEW WHEN HE WAS NOT WANTED



Meet some the founders of Podcast User Magazine at this year's PodcastCon 2006 in Great Britain on November 18th.

The next Podcamp is on it's way, A BarCamp-Unconference to be held in San Francisco in November, venue to be announced. The Pittsburgh event is on the 11th and 12th of November. <http://www.podcampwest.org>



GigaVox Media

The Levelator by GigaVox

This is a handy little free tool for levelling audio before loading up a podcast. The Levelator uses a Java application to normalize the sound levels and automatically provide an even sound all round. Although you can't control the amount of level, there is no reason why you couldn't bring it back in an editing programme and up the volume once the spikes have been removed. If your software lacks a normaliser, then this is for you.

(I wonder if I can get it to work on the neighbours?)

MIXCRAFT™ by **Acoustica**

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ASK AUNTIE PUM

Dear Aunty PUM

Am I the only one who can't read all of Richard Vobes' words in these two issues? The large images of the microphone cover the text in one issue, and the colours of the text and the microphone are so similar that again it's hard to read. I don't think it's my PDF reader, as I'm using Acrobat 4.0 on WinXP PE SP2+

Kevin - <http://firstpersonshow.net>

I think I know what your problem may be, and here's a few tips for others to get the full enjoyment out of Podcast User Magazine.

Kevin is using Acrobat Reader version 4.0, which is now a little dated. PUM is put together using Adobe software, and like many programmes, great changes happen with each update. Acrobat Reader version 7.0 we know works just fine. You can also use Foxit Reader, a very handy little programme that is much faster to open and scroll; it handles PDFs well but does have the drawback in that the hyperlinks don't always work.

Next we have the 'Contents' menu on page two. Clicking on the page numbers will take you directly to that article, because of this feature, we no longer use the Adobe Bookmark system.

Printing. We know that many people like to print off copies of PUM to read away from the computer but, of course, this does use a lot of ink. To save ink, select the print option in the Adobe Reader and simply select the page range you require, such as 2-16. This will just print page two through to and including sixteen. You can of course just print one or two selected pages if you wish.

Review Roulette

Ever wondered why the Podcasting directories are full of 5-star reviews of podcasts on mainstream subjects? Could it be that the only people that can **be bothered** to write reviews for each podcast are the people that really enjoy that particular podcast? Could it be that many people can't **be bothered** to stray from the mainstream? Here at Podcast User Magazine, **we are bothered**. Why is that? Well the Roulette team have spent the last month listening to a bunch of podcasts not because we enjoy them, but simply because the Random Podcast Picker chose them out of the selection over at PodcastAlley.com. It's enough to make anyone bothered. That way, we hope to find for you some real undiscovered treasures, at the risk of exposing our ears to podcasts that deserve to be at the bottom of the ocean.

This month, fate chose us three podcasts for fanatics. If you're fanatical about Gaming, TV and Macs, then this could be your lucky month...

MyMac

<http://www.MyMac.com>



MyMac.com is a long-established website featuring product reviews and other writings, with something of a Mac bias. They've also been podcasting since 2004!

MyMac.com offers two podcasts on its feed: the MyMac Podcast, and MyMac Mini. The main podcast recently reached its 100th show and is a home for Mac news and other Mac-related chat. Discursive in style, with two or three MyMac pundits reacting to the latest news in the Mac community, the shows we listened to were occasionally dull and meandering, self-indulgent at times, and at some times not Mac-related at all.

The 'mini' podcast is a more recent offshoot and is a little over 10 shows old. It is not a short podcast, as you might have assumed from the name, but is in fact made up of multiple segments from various contributors. Most of these segments are short, sweet and focused, such as "Fenestration" and "Not Mac News". These were the real gems here and probably indicate a good direction for the MyMac team to continue in.

The MyMac podcasts generally have a relatively clean, well-balanced sound, though David Cohen's otherwise excellent "Fenestration" segments have annoying noise reduction, which cuts off the beginning of every sentence. Just get a better mic, Dave, and ease off the noise reduction.

With the numerous Mac-related podcasts available, this is a very competitive space. We found this one to be fairly well-produced but rather slow-paced and lacking in much content that piqued our interest. For Mac users, there are other shows that are more informative and engaging.

Text by Simon Toon and Marilyn Madsen

Production : 3.5
Content : 3

GAMERCAST NEWS FEED

ONE OF YOUR BEST SOURCES ON THE WEB FOR EVERYTHING GOING ON IN THE WORLD OF VIDEO GAMES!

<http://www.gamercastpodcast.com>



Matthew Goldzman reviews and discusses video games and consoles

Oh dear. It had to come sometime. My first really negative review. Brace yourselves, because here it comes...

The Website First off – the website. It consists of a Podtrac player in the upper frame and a Blogger site in the bottom, which is unrelated to the actual podcast though it does discuss games news. There are no shownotes for any of the shows, no feed listed anywhere and none detectable by my 'catcher. I had to go back to the Podcast Alley page to get it from there so I could download the shows. Not a great start, and it only got worse when I started to listen.

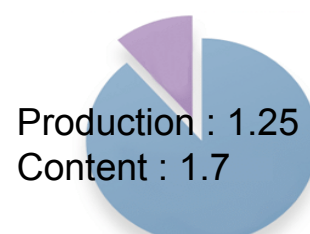
Production & Content I began with Starfox Command review; nice movie-sountrack musical intro, but wait ! It wasn't an intro – it was the soundbed and it was playing at the same volume as host Matthew Goldzman's vocals, effectively drowning him out. Not only that, but he was getting so close to his mic that he was distorting, clipping and popping away merrily throughout. There was some good content in there when I could hear it, though the crashing orchestral soundbed looped so often that I ended up being so distracted that I didn't really take much in after the third loop.

Things didn't improve with the Mobile Edition episode. Eight minutes of very badly distorted audio where fellow schoolmates were asked "Xbox360, PS3 or Wii ?" over and over and gave either a one-word answer or swore (thankfully beeped out) was almost too much for even my normal patience to deal with. However, as an fair and impartial reviewer, I ploughed on.

For variety, I tried listening to a few episodes through their Podtrac player on the site; the first, Episode 14, came out like two distorted chipmunks (encoding issues ?), and the next consisted of two guests on some kind of Skype-style VOIP program called Hot Recorder chatting with Matthew. He laughingly plugged it as enabling crystal-clear calls, which it patently wasn't. Whilst he did the intro, the loud sounds emanating from my left speaker suggested that the guest was simultaneously dismantling and eating his microphone. Again, the sound quality was so bad that I couldn't concentrate. The host was hard-panned left and the guests hard right, with one guest at too-high a volume and drowning Matthew out, all the while continuing to clatter, bang, echo and make strange noises on the mic. The other was so quiet that he was barely audible. Both guests sounded completely unprepared, bored and miserable. I could go on, but I'll spare you all. This 'podcast' clearly illustrates how it most definitely shouldn't be done. Listen and weep.

Sorry Matthew, but this is really a very shoddy podcast (and I use the term 'podcast' loosely here). The sound and website are awful. Buried under that awfulness is some good review and discussion content, but it's being overwhelmed by the dreadful production. Try reading Podcast User Magazine to pick up some podcasting tips, and have a listen to some of the podcasts produced by the contributors to see how it can be done, often with minimal outlay but total professionalism and enthusiasm.

Text by Grant Mason





The TV Addict Podcast

<http://www.thetvaddict.com>



Gather round television fans! Break out the snacks and lean back the recliner for the TV Addict Podcast.

Two television enthusiasts from Toronto, Canada, Daniel Malen and his cohost/friend Ariel, present a weekly review of what's new and what has been viewed. Covering a wide variety of shows from different networks and genres, this podcast is for those who love television. The basic format is a musical introduction for "The TV News for the Week" composed by Daniel, which is followed with a day-by-day review and comments for the shows that have been viewed by each.

Daniel and Ariel have good on-air chemistry - clearly two friends sitting down and discussing a subject about which they are knowledgeable and passionate. With an at-home ambiance, each show is 30 to 40 minutes in length, depending on the real-life interruptions such as cell phones, Daniel's dog taking off with his TIVO remote, and the naming of new pet fish. With 23 shows posted since January 2006 with only a break for what appears to be the summer rerun season, the TV Addict gets good marks for consistency.

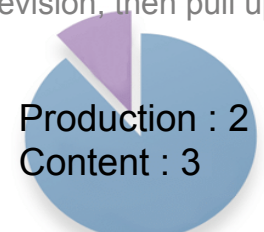
Structurally, we felt that it was quite disjointed, seeming to flit about from one TV show to another in no particular order, except perhaps which night of the week the show airs in the United States. For those outside the US (where the TV shows are typically shown first) they wouldn't have seen the episodes being talked about, so some of the comments wouldn't make sense.

A visit to the website/blog for the TV Addict found a graphically pleasing site with lots of celebrity and show photos. With almost daily blogs (sometimes multiple daily postings) Daniel keeps his listeners up to the minute in the happenings of TV land. Included at the site are celebrity interviews, the listener poll of the week and a shop with T-shirts of Daniel's design. Also adding to the content are two associated bloggers: Jenny with "This Week on TV" and Amrie with "My Take on TV". It has a couple of down sides, though: the header graphic at the top of every page is so large that the user is required to scroll down to see any of the content and, more importantly for podcast listeners, the RSS feed link is not on the Podcast page (it's three screens down on the Home page).

On the technical side we found the audio quality to vary greatly between the intro music and the speaking voices, the intro music being strong, clear and balanced while their speaking voices come across unevenly and sometimes a bit shrill. On the first listen, you might think your earphones are broken because the sound is quite tinny, but subsequent listening on speakers confirms that it lacks sufficient bass. Both Ariel and Daniel tend to speak fairly quickly and speak over each other, which makes it difficult to understand what they're saying sometimes (and would be especially difficult for someone to follow if their first language wasn't English). Slowing down the rate of speech would greatly improve this podcast.

In summary, if you are a television aficionado who watches episodic primetime television, then pull up a couch and join in the fun with the TV Addict Podcast. Their zeal is infectious!

Text by Marilyn Madsen and Chris Matson





Will Ellis

New Zealand

Global voices
by Janet Parkinson

KIWI CASTS...

New Zealand may seem like a rather distant island to most of the world – but perhaps herein lies exactly the reason why podcasting is seen by some as a great platform to be part of the global scene. You'd not expect to find a huge number of 'casts, but given that the total population is only just over 4 million, you'd be surprised! Let's sample a few:



The Beige Brigade – BYC Podcasts

www.beigebrigade.co.nz

Gather all cricket lovers! The Beige Brigade of New Zealand are armed and determined to win over everyone with their passion for the game – and boy does their 'clamorous, optimistic and boisterous support' show! Having decided to 'give this new Podcasting thing a crack' they've clearly taken to it, producing regular bi-weekly shows. 'Slightly tongue in cheek, heavy on retro, but still with enough cricket for the discerning fan' they're brimming over with excitement for the game – it's a cracking show. Word of warning / advice - watch out for your levels, guys.



Production : 3
Content : 4



<http://Psurkit.net>

Acting as a platform for the community to explore and bring together New Zealand’s music and culture, this podcast draws a wide variety of music, ideas and cultural expression. From Ambient to Reggae, Glitch to Techno, there’s something for everyone! The Psurkit podcast has grown out of Obscure (New Zealand’s longest running dance music website), so it’s not surprising that the production quality is excellent. Here are a great variety of cool mixes of music that really work.



Production : 4.5
Content : 4



Korero Pt England

<http://www.ptengland.school.nz/index.php?family=1,449>

With Podcasting now on the school curriculum in many countries, it’s interesting to see how this primary school have taken podcasting – and more recently vidcasting – to the heart of their education syllabus with resounding success and results. In fact, their project ‘The Global Village’ put them as finalists in the 2006 Computer World Excellence Awards. As they say “we may live in a small suburb, but people all over the world can hear what we have to say. For our students the whole world is our village, thanks to podcasting”. Apple, too, have picked up on its success – check out the article [here](#).



Production: 3
Content: 4
Cute Enthusiasm: 5

A Kiwi Songwriter

<http://luigicappel.libsyn.com/>

Luigi Capel is a songwriter. This podcast sets out to present his experiences as he works to promote his songs. It will include elements such as “setting goals, song writing, management, performance, networking, learning, marketing, schedule/calendar and priorities”. Carefully running through the pitfalls and basic principles, he aims to appeal to those many songwriters looking to make it in the music world. Well presented, clear and instructive, he could well be on to a real winner here!



Production : 3
Content : 4

Well, I’m heading back North for December now and thought I’d head for France, so any hints or tips before I arrive would be great! A bientot!

New boys on block

The Roland Edirol R-9

The latest addition to the Roland stable is the R-9, the successor to the R-1, looking a little like an electric shaver, this compact device with its inclusive microphone is the complete package.

- 24-bit/48kHz (or 44.1kHz) uncompressed recording
- Up to 320kbps MP3 playback and recording
- Records to SD card (64MB card included)
- High-grade stereo condenser microphone built in
- Mic and Line audio inputs; USB 2.0 I/O
- Easy operation, user-friendly graphic display
- Ultra portable, half the size of the R-1
- Long battery life



The Samson Zoom H4 Handy Digital Recorder

Samson introduce the H4 mobile hand- held recorder resembling a prop from Star Trek. We're gld to see the big boys taking hand-held recording seriously and giving us the tools to do it.

- Records 24-bit/96 kHz digital audio,MP3 up to 320kbps
- Two studio quality X/Y pattern condenser microphones
- Two combination XLR-1/4-inch input jacks with phantom power
- Onboard studio effects compression, limiting and mic modeling
- 1/8-inch headphone jack provided for monitoring
- 128MB Secure Digital (SD) card included. Using a 2GB SD gives 380 minutes of recording, CD Quality Up to 34 hours recording in MP3 stereo mode
- USB mass-storage interface
- Four hours of continuous recording, 2 AA batteries
- Back-lit, 128x64 pixel LCD provides the visual interface
- AC adapter, windshield cover, USB Cable and tripod adapter

RØDE USB Microphone

Based on Røde's acclaimed Broadcaster microphone, the Podcaster delivers studio-grade results through a tight cardioid response that seamlessly connects directly to PC or Mac with a single USB cable, avoiding the added cost and complexity of a separate computer audio interface. Supplied by

<http://www.sourcedistribution.co.uk>

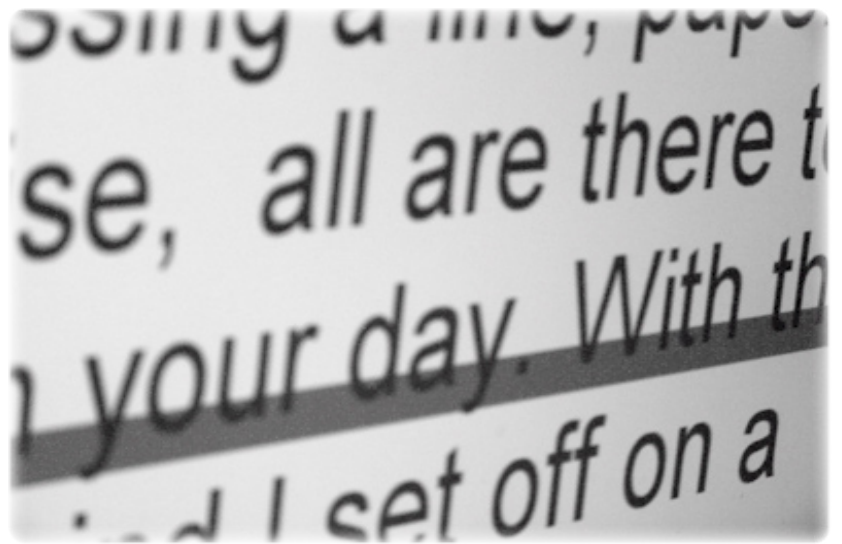


To be reviewed next issue PUM

Er . . .

Prompt!

The Autocue



by Jimmy Hastell

Having done several 'takes' to get a scripted item right I know the frustrations this can cause, stumbling, missing a line, paper noise, all are there to ruin your day. With this in mind I set off on a search for Autocue software at a reasonable price.

So what am I looking for? Simply a means to place a text or Doc file on the screen within a window and to scroll at a speed I'm comfortable with, no more, no less. Here's what I found.

Cueprompter from www.cueprompter.com

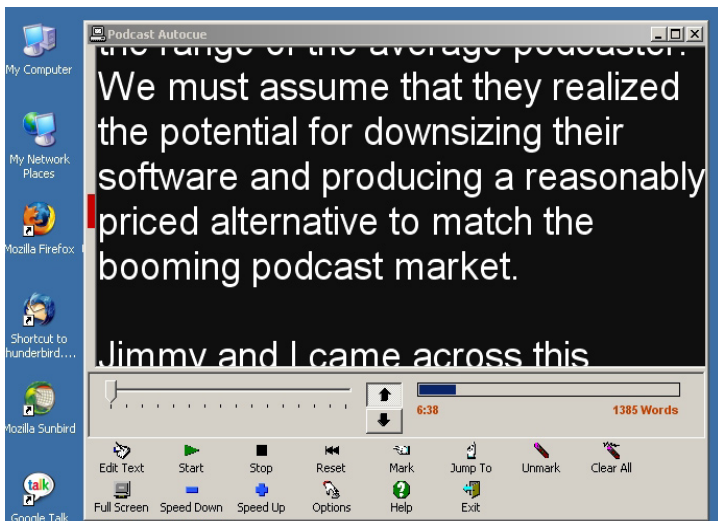
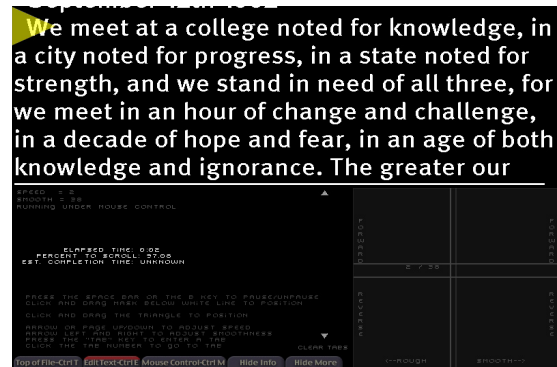
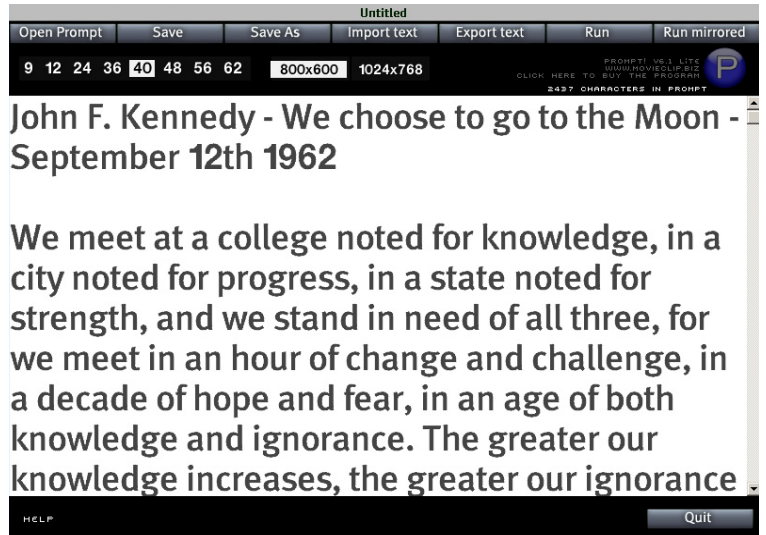
Cueprompter is a browser-based autocue for Windows and requires JavaScript to be enabled. It is totally free for both commercial and non-commercial use and ideal if you are an occasional user and don't want to add any more software to your already swelling hard drive.

Limited to 2000 characters, you are required to cut and paste your script in to the text box on screen, set the display options and press 'start prompter'. Selecting small screen and small font will enable you to 'box size' the display and still see your desktop behind. Controlling the speed of scroll is achieved by clicking backwards and forwards, repeated clicking speeds it up and stop will halt it in its tracks. It is designed for use with Internet Explorer but I have found that with the exception of the mirror option it works just fine with Firefox.



Next we have Prompt! from <http://www.movieclip.biz/prompt.html>

Prompt! offers versions for both Windows and Mac OSX for \$44. There are the 'free to use Lite' versions for both for text less than 2500 characters. It has all the features you would expect from a more professional version; text import, mouse control, text editing, etc. However, I have to admit I found the scrolling text to be jerky and it takes over the centre of your screen.



Finally we have Podcast Autocue. <http://www.podcastautocue.com/index.htm>

A Windows-only based programme unfortunately, but it was the one I liked best. It's not free, but cheap at \$19.95. (£11.00).

Where this wins hands down for me is the simplicity of use, clarity of control and the ease of changing the display colours. The other big big, bonus (no, I'm not on commission) is it's fully sizable screen: thin it down and the text stays complete, no cropping suffered. Text files can be imported and edited, markers placed and jumped to, keyboard shortcuts a plenty, in fact I got on with this very well indeed, certainly a 'straight out the box' product. There is a detailed help screen for those who want to know more.

I have contacted the man behind this (Nick) and he has informed me that you will get lifetime updates as well.





by Paul Parkinson - Editor

Phew! Podcast Expo 2006 was a BLAST! I can't believe how many people visited our booth and said hi! Lots and lots of our existing readers came by and said thanks for the work we do and that simple act meant so much to Linda and me while we were working away.

We kind of thought people liked what we and all the Podcast User Magazine crew did, but to have people come up and say it to our faces meant so much. Thank you to everyone who came by, new readers and old, we appreciated it so much.

Now, before I get into this in any great detail, if you're looking for details of how wild the PUM team were at the Expo or for grot and gory details on who did what to whom you're looking in the wrong place! I am a party animal; I do like a beer or wine or gin or whisk(e)y or whatever's on offer and I have been known to let my hair down a bit [ONLY A BIT? – JANET] - when you see me next, do ask me about the aircraft carrier in San Francisco bay and the ice hockey stadium in Helsinki! I've been to around 100 conferences in my time and most of them are dull, dull, dull, but the Expo was different. I was going to behave myself and not create havoc if I got bored.



Bored? The chance would have been a fine thing. We spent so much time on the stand giving out our info sheets, CD-ROMs of back issues (thanks Linda, great job) and business cards that I didn't get the chance to be bored. At one stage we had people queuing to talk to us on the stand! I got through nearly 300 business cards in two days.

Podcast Expo 2006 Ontario CA

When it was quiet(er) I went and spoke to a number of the other booths and spoke at length to several about how they could support PUM. Our desire, here at PUM Towers, is to ensure that PUM is always free to the reader, and if we can off-set some of the costs by taking in some advertising, then so be it. You might notice an advert or two in this issue.



Copyright-Andrew Darlow

One of the weirdest things about the Expo was meeting up with people you've been working with for close to a year and have never met. People like Chuck Tomasi (left, above) Paul and Judy from TotalPodcastrophe (second and third from right), Ewan Spence (beard and waist-coat) and CC Chapman (see below) but most of all people like Linda Mills (far right). Linda can rightly and justifiably take the credit for us being at the Expo in the first place and for the success we had at the Expo. She stayed up copying disks, printing and sticking on labels and then putting the disks into the little sleeves. She had the banner made and organised everything. THANK YOU LINDA FROM EVERYONE AT PUM!

Shout out to Andrew Darlow for the team picture, too.

I turned down a couple of invites to parties as I was staying with a friend and his family around 50 miles away, so I had an excuse – I was driving. I couldn't drink so I didn't go out of my way to party. Regrets? Sure! Having seen the pictures on Flickr I saw a LOT of people having a great time. And I could have murdered a beer (or 12) as I was leaving each evening but the fact I was driving, on roads I wasn't familiar with and in the dark stopped me from doing it. A shame – but next year I'll be there again. And I'll have my drinking boots on. If this next year goes well maybe we'll have a PUM party. We'll see...

So, why were we there? Three main reasons; (1) tell more people about the Magazine to attract more readers; (2) attract a little advertising and (3) look out for more contributors. We were successful on all three counts.

Podcast Expo 2006 Ontario CA

I wish I had had enough energy to go to the awards ceremony but the flight and lack of sleep had knocked the stuffing out of me. Kudos to all the winners but special über-kudos to CC Chapman (below, right) for the Podsafe Music Award, Leo Laporte for Podcast Person of the Year and Fr. Roderick Vonhögen for the Religious Podcast award (below left). Thanks to CC Chapman for this picture.



It was great to meet a number of the people in podcasting I have respected for a while. I saw Slau and Ewan Spence do a live podcast with Lance Anderson and Dan Klass at the LA Podcasters stand – none of whom I had met before the Expo and all of whom I put in the jolly decent chap bracket.

I had a series of long chats with Father Roderick from the SQPN (Star Quest Production Network) and I am really hoping I will be able to interview him in the not too distant future for the magazine.

Copyright CC Chapman

A number of people asked me if I was Podcastpaul (Paul Nicholls, podcaster and lawyer from Birmingham, England; erstwhile Editor of PUM) and I was sooo tempted to have a little fun at their (and Paul's) expense but I was good and told them that unfortunately I wasn't but I was mate of his if it helped. They went away happy knowing that they had met a mate of Podcastpaul's...

I had the chance to go in the Podshow Stretch Hummer en route from the Expo to the Podshow UN-Expo. What is the point of a vehicle like that? An uncomfortable, gas-guzzling total waste of road space – or is it my European eyes? At the Podshow UNexpo I had the chance to meet Richard Brewer-Hay, Joe Carpenter and the lovely Cali Lewis (good handshake!) and her husband Neil, amongst others.

Before all you "Podshow Is Evil" folk start panicking there's not much Podshow and PUM can do together and still have PUM maintain full editorial independence. We want to retain the right to blow hot and cold on Podshow's efforts (and anyone else's for that matter) but it was good to meet them and talk a few things through.

I've included some pictures courtesy of CC Chapman, MasterMaq (from Flickr) and Andrew Darlow. I had brought my camera with me but didn't get the chance to use it as much as I wanted. So, thanks to all you guys for the pictures in here.

All in all, the Expo was a lot of fun, a lot of hard work and a truly social occasion – you can count on us being there next year. We'll be there in force if people sticking their hand up now for the trip next year are anything to go by...

Impressions From the Expo, 2006

Linda Mills

An event bold enough to call itself an 'expo' promises to offer a wide range of experiences and opportunities, and the Portable Media and Podcast Expo did all that with abundance. A quick web search will yield many stories and pictures and musings, each specific to the owner and each as illuminating as any one blindfolded man's description of an elephant. Undaunted, I'm adding a few Expo memories here, from a committed podcast listener and a member of the Podcast User Magazine team.

Getting there is half the fun: On The 10 from LA to Ontario, with a trunkful of luggage and a carful of non-native accents: Ewan Spence, Jason Jarrett, and Jimmy Golding. Ewan had the iPod/RoadTrip duties as I drove the familiar highway, this time to the sounds of Hollow Horse and the Edinburgh Fringe Podcast.

Hummer? Never saw the Hummer...: At the Marriott desk we ran into Brian and Tina Ibbott, who joined us in indulging Ewan's need for a big breakfast at Denny's, no matter that it was well past noon. As the six of us walked the few blocks to the restaurant, Brian and Ewan lagged a bit behind, working through the plan that was announced a month later, that Brian's 'Today in Music History' would join The Podcast Network.

Boothmates: I think I recognized Paul Parkinson in the early-morning half-light right away because he looks the way he acts – friendly and witty and gregarious. Or it might have been the Roger Smalls t-shirt.... Paul and Judy Hutchinson were easy to spot, with their Intensive-Care Bears and pocketed pangolins. Those three colleagues, with their unrelenting good humour, made the two long days in the Exhibit Hall go by in a flash.

And the top three questions at the booth were...: When do you begin publishing? (last February).... What's the cost of a subscription? (it's free).... How can I get a printed copy? (print the pages you want from the PDF).... The longer I talked about the magazine, the more obvious the PDF format became, and people really 'got it' -- the PDF gives everyone the same viewing and reading experience, and the electronic format allows us to be seen in over 98 countries without a single publishing or postage charge. And the hyperlinks within the stories lead the reader to other websites and audio files, something a paper magazine can never do. It was particularly gratifying to be complimented on "using the medium to its fullest", but best of all was seeing that recognition dawn on the listeners. That was worth the whole trip.

Thanks to the countless people who walked up to show others that "my article's in here!" or "here's where they mention my podcast!" or just "look at THIS!" Thanks to those who gave us the chance to attach faces to familiar voices and those who took some time to stop by with words of encouragement. The list of names far exceeds the length of this page. Rest assured, though, that I plan on being in touch with each and every one of you who had an idea for an article or who offered to be a sounding board for future plans. Thanks again for making us feel so much at home, so far away.

Podcast and Mobile Media Expo California 2006 - were you there? (We were)



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Tip-Bits



tdi of Argentina carries an interview with our own Jimmy Hastell of Podcast User Magazine for its item on Podcasting. (in Spanish, not that Jimmy can undersatnd a word of it anyway).



Friends In Tech, The people who brought you 'A Geek Christmas Carol' last year have come up with this Halloween Special . . .

'The Server Room Of Horrors'

Starring :

Chuck Tomasi. Douglas E Welch. Kreg Steppe. Steve Holden. Kevin Devin. Matt Hull. Andy Helsby. Lance Heath. Victor Cajiao. Rich Nason. Larry Pesce. Paul Asadoorian. Mike McBride. George Starcher. Melissa Devin. and special guests Amber MacArther (featured in last months issue) Tee Morris (Podcasting For Dummies) John Bell and Cindy Taylor

www.friendsintech.com

PodCastCONference 2006

I remember the conversation now – there were half a dozen of us or so podcasting at the time. The gist of the conversation was something along the lines of “wouldn’t it be a great idea for the six of us to meet in a pub somewhere?” The rest, as I always seem to say, is history.

When that conversation took place in the first months of 2005, no-one really knew what to expect, but when the BBC asked if they could “come to the conference”, the thing was born – we were having a conference. A top-drawer panel of folks spoke, including luminaries from BBC and Virgin radio. [Adrian Pegg](#), [Neil Dixon](#), [Alex Bellinger](#) and I were either brave or barmy. We’d throw a conference – with a five figure budget – and hope that folks would come.

When the conference took place at a four-star Oxford Street, London hotel and was covered by the BBC, Financial Times, Independent and a whole host of other on- and off-line journals, we knew we had been involved in something really special. The mere fact that folks turned up was incredible; the amount of people, calibre of the speakers who took part and the immense fun of it all was testament to the community aspect of what podcasting was all about.

September 2005 was an important day in the annals of podcasting. It was the world’s first conference designed to celebrate this brand-new phenomenon. It was done in style with folks flying in from around the world, and we hope they’ll be doing the same this year.

On Saturday, 18th November at the [CCT Smithfield, London](#), (near to St Paul’s), between 10am and 6pm, the second conference is happening. We learnt from the last conference that those attending wanted more interactivity, demonstrations, bands, technical know-how and more. Well, they’re getting the lot. A number of panels, constituted from well-known podcasting names, will be discussing business, creativity and music.

Three artists will be playing live sets: the Shakes, Jimmy Golding, and Ellie Myles. As with most conferences, the networking at lunch and at the post-conference meet-up at a nearby pub or restaurant will be well worth the trip, too, as it certainly was last year.

This year, online marketers [Cheeze](#) take prime sponsorship place at an event that I absolutely cannot wait to attend.

Check the [programme links here](#), and look for updates and late-breaking conference news at www.podcastcon.com. Amongst other participants, [CC Chapman](#) will be flying over from Boston.

If you have a keen or even passing interest in podcasting, this is a conference you must attend. [Be there!](#)

Now, what should I wear?

Paul Nicholls



Inside the Podcasters' Studio

podCast411

Paul and Judy from TotalPodcastrophe ask questions of Rob Walch

In an effort to better know our colleagues, we are taking a look 'Inside the Podcasters' Studio'. We want to know what makes podcasters do what they do, what motivates them and where they see their podcast going in the future.

This month inside the podcasters' studio, we are privileged to meet Rob Walch host of Podcast411. Described as "The 411 on podCasts, podCasters and podCasting." He offers advice on how to podcast, podcast directories, interviews with podcasters and people in related fields. Rob also co-authored "Tricks of the Podcasting Masters" with Mur Lafferty, host of Geek Fu Action Grip podcast. Let us begin with a brief self-introduction...

Rob: I was born on November 27th 1966 in Bayport, New York. I currently live in Overland Park, Kansas, with my wife, Karyn, my son, Henry, and our three dogs. My occupation is Podcaster; I have been working full time as a podcasting consultant since April 1st 2005.

When, and how, did you first hear about podcasting?

Rob: I first heard of podcasting in mid September of 2004 and first listened to a podcast in early October 2004.

What was the first podcast you subscribed to, and why?

Rob: The first one I subscribed to was Adam Curry's, the DSC. I guess I subscribed out of a morbid curiosity - I just could not believe the guy with the big hair from MTV could actually be a geek.

What do you look for in a podcast?

Rob: A strong passion by the podcaster for the subject they are talking about. Content that is delivered in a clear and understandable manner. In other words - podcasts that get to the heart of the matter quickly and do not beat around the bush or are nothing but filler. And a good set of ID3 tags - so I can find the show on my iPod and in iTunes.

What puts you off a podcast?

Rob: Long dead air or other annoying sounds that clearly should have been edited out before they posted the show. Editing is our friend, and those that do not edit when they clearly need to are shows I do not stay subscribed to. I also cannot stand a podcast that starts off with a commercial - if the first thing I hear on a podcast is anyone other than the podcaster - they have pretty much lost me as a listener.

What drove you, personally, to become a podcaster yourself?

Rob: I was always one of those people who called into morning radio talk shows - wanting to be on the air myself. Podcasting gave me the opportunity to create and host my own show. It was just a hobby I was always waiting to happen. And as I was a big fan of Inside the Actors Studio - I designed my podcast to be something very similar - that is why my show has been called "Inside the Actors Studio - except for Podcasting".

What motivates you, currently, to continue podcasting?

Rob: I have only interviewed 166 podcasts out of 60,000. So many shows, so little time. I really just love talking to other podcasters.

I enjoy asking people about something they are passionate about and getting that interaction where two geeks are just talking about geek stuff. And that by doing that, my show is actually able to teach other people about podcasting, is just icing on the cake.

How have podcasts changed your attitude toward, consumption of, traditional media?

Rob: What is traditional media? I have not listened to the radio in almost two years. Podcasting has completely taken over all of my audio listening time and then some. I actually only listen to music now when it is on a podcast - like Dave's lounge or Hill Billy Deluxe or one of the other music podcasts I am subscribed to.

How have podcasts changed your life in a more general sense?

Rob: Well, I have been all over the US talking about podcasting - over 15 presentations so far in 2006. I have written a book on podcasting (Tricks of the Podcasting Masters), quit my very lucrative career to podcast full time (not nearly as lucrative yet - please tell my wife I am trying) and moved half-way across the US to set up shop to do that. So I would pretty much say podcasting has completely changed my life from where it was two years ago. And it has all been for the best. I have made so many new friends, I have met with Senator Edwards multiple times because of podcasting, as well as Governor Richardson. I have talked with Ronald Moore, Walt Mossberg, Larry Kudlow, Phil Gordon and many others I just never would have had the opportunity to meet with or talk to if it was not for podcasting.

What do you see in the future for you, and your podcast?

Rob: Hopefully many, many more good interviews with other podcasters. Actually, I have planned to interview quite a few podcasters in person at the Portable Media Expo at the end of September. So as you might expect by the previous answers, my future pretty much can be summed up by one word: Podcasting.

Rob Walch can be found at Podcast411
<http://www.podcast411.com/>

Judy and Paul Hutchinson can be found at Total PodCastrophe
<http://www.TotalPodCastrophe.com>



Tricks Of The Podcasting Masters by Rob Walch and Mur Lafferty
Que Publishing
www.quepublishing.com



THE NEW MEDIA CONVERSATION STARTS HERE!



When Christopher S. Penn was asked to write about PodCamp for Podcast User Magazine, he figured the best thing to do would be to open up the article drafting process to everyone involved with PodCamp. Thanks to Christopher Penn, Justin Kownacki, Chris Brogan, Mark Blevis, and Steve Garfield for their contributions.

Extremely Brief History of UnConferences

Dave Winer wrote the Fundamental Law of Conventional Conferences, which states, "The sum of the expertise of the people in the audience is greater than the sum of expertise of the people on stage" (1). PodCamp, BarCamp, and other xCamp UnConferences leverage this idea, that everyone is an expert in something, and everyone has something to share and contribute.

Why PodCamp

The idea for PodCamp began at BarCamp Boston in June, when founders Chris Brogan and Christopher S. Penn got a chance to experience an UnConference and found the information-sharing method exceptionally valuable. The one thing both founders noted was that the information presented at BarCamp Boston was extremely technical and there were no offerings for new media. Brogan and Penn set out immediately after BarCamp Boston to create PodCamp, with a focus on blogging, podcasting, video podcasting, social networking and new media, in the hopes that an UnConference focused on one of the most rapidly growing online trends would attract a lot of very smart people to share ideas - and it did.

Fundraising and Attendance

Creating PodCamp, however, wasn't the easiest of tasks; neither Brogan nor Penn had any experience in event planning or conference planning, nor did they have significant experience in fundraising. There was, however, exceptional interest in the New England Podcasting and Vlogging communities, and key organizers joined the project to make it happen, including Bryan Person, Steve Garfield, and Adam Weiss.

Early sponsors such as the Museum of Science, Boston, the Student Loan Network, and Porter Novelli helped to solidify plans and provide much-needed momentum to recruit other sponsors. By far, the most difficult task for the organizers was finding a venue; once secured, fundraising became the top priority.



PodCamp Boston, a free two-day unconference held at Bunker Hill Community College in Charlestown, Massachusetts, was advertised via email and posts made to disparate message boards across the internet. From the moment a prospective participant visited the website (PodCamp.org), they knew they'd be in for a new experience, because the first thing a participant did to show their interest in attending PodCamp was to edit the website's core pages to indicate they were coming. It was magic from the start.



Copyright-David Berlind

Participants could write up sessions they'd be willing to lead, or sessions they hoped someone could teach them. In prior barcamps the schedule for sessions was decided on during the conference. Lots of yellow stickies were placed on a board and it was organized chaos, with emphasis on the chaos part.

Some feared that chaos would prevail and were uncomfortable at leaving the scheduling to the last minute, so as the day of PodCamp came close, a schedule was added to the wiki so that people could pre-schedule when they wanted to present topics. This helped people plan their schedules ahead of time.

Once the event began, spontaneous sessions and follow-on conversations began changing the face of the schedule page. Asking an organizer which talks were coming up was silly, because the organizer would look at the same dynamic map as the participant would. The meaning was clear: power was truly in the hands of the people.



Copyright-David Berlind

The most amazing aspect of PodCamp for many attendees was the true peer-to-peer nature of the discussions created by housing so many disparate minds in one space. Although podcasting, like any medium, is subject to a "star system," the democracy on display was refreshing. Established web personalities such as Amanda Congdon, Steve Garfield and the creators of Galactica and Rocketboom were happy to exchange ideas with everyone from entry-level podcasters to web-app providers who'd been powering their media from behind the scenes.

On the second day of PodCamp Steve Garfield posted a new session he wanted to lead and called it a 'Ze Frank Video workshop'. Almost 20 people attended and joined in to create three videos in 30 minutes. This included people joining together to arrange themselves into a choir, joining together to choreograph a flying eagle made out of people's bodies and to produce a joint video about their ideas for creating content.

It was an amazing example of the intelligence of the room synergistically getting together to create something.

After uploading the flying eagle video to Ze Frank's site, he used it in the opening of [his show on October 13th!](#)

Boston PodCamp Stats

We had 346 registrations, and well over 230 showed up on day one. Day two probably saw another 150 participants. We raised \$15,000 by mostly \$200 donations, with a few notable major contributors (Museum of Science Boston, Topaz Partners/Podcast Ready). After and around the event, we had over 700 pictures posted to Flickr and around 1000 blog posts. It was an extremely fruitful experience that we plan to build on further.

Where we are going from PodCamp Boston

Now that the seeds have been planted, it's time for the PodCamp community to grow together, sharing knowledge and pushing the limits of the medium. And growing it is. Since the attendees scattered to the winds as the event drew to a close, new PodCamp conferences are being planned. You can't pay for an endorsement like that.

There are concerns, though. The PodCamp brand was conceived by a small group of people with a true vision of collaboration and participation. The danger, now, is that the PodCamp vision could diverge and be adapted in ways that hinder the community and the PodCamp brand. It would be prudent for the founders of PodCamp to formally publish their vision and the guidelines for using the PodCamp name - and then "CC" (Creative Commons) their brand. Guidelines can be developed for the ways in which the name and identity can be used; for parameters for conference fees, fundraising and the use of funds (i.e., can any single individual, group of individuals or business interests directly profit from the event?) and, finally, for what presenters are permitted to say with respect to promoting their own business activities and outright sales pitches for their products and services while at the front of the room.

For more information on future PodCamp conferences, check <http://podcamp.pbwiki.com>.

- PodCamp Pittsburgh - November 11-12, 2006
- PodCampWest - November 18-19, 2006
- PodCamp Philly - January 20-21, 2007
- PodCamp Toronto - February 24-25, 2007
- PodCamp Atlanta - March 2007
- PodCamp NYC - Spring 2007
- PodCamp Boston 2 - May 5-6, 2007

Steve Garfield adds his thoughts on the day:



Copyright-Bryan Person

Getting on Ze Frank's the show really makes the whole Podcamp experience complete. We had a room full of people share their ideas and then come together to make a video for Ze, which he ended up using on that day's show.

It's just a small example of what the future of collaborative media making could be like.

What if television thought about their viewers as creative participants?

This idea of a future where we are all participants just became a lot clearer to me. We are experimenting with the future right now, and moments like this bring it into focus.

Although we can't see the future, I think we've just seen a glimpse.

Riding the Fire Eagle Danger Day!



Podcasting Proximity

by Paul Nicholls

As I sat recording a recent podcast, I cued up the tracks, gathered my notes, set up my mixer, tightened the boom of the mike stand and wondered, really, why do I do this?

The rhetorical question is a good one to ask – especially if you’ve been at it for some time - I’m coming up to two years blogging and podcasting this December.

I spoke recently to a good chum and fellow podcaster and posed the same question. Incredibly, the answer he gave was precisely the same answer as mine. His answer could have been uttered from my lips: “Two reasons really – one, I love doing this; secondly, I love doing it for my listeners.”

My show has a given format, like many others, but I’ll always have the listener in mind when I’m picking a track, highlighting a news item or reviewing. Very often I’ll find myself saying “Bernadette, you’ll love this one” or “Ken, have a listen to the guitar in the middle eight, mate”.

When did you last hear a radio jock so personally address his audience? This next led me on to the power of viral community: I’ll look at Adrian’s blog, he’ll discuss x, y or z and John comments – John’s a listener of mine too. I look at John’s blog, he’ll talk about a great new group he’s heard, I listen out for them on recommendation and play them, they’ll mention me, and Adrian or John may see that, as well as other folks who will check out the podcast or blog. The whole thing is so incredibly community-based.

In any community you’ll drop by someone – precisely the same happens in podcasting. I’ll drop in and out of Rowley’s show, but I’ll always keep one eye and ear out for him and make sure I keep in touch. I find out he does the same – we all do.

Just prior to penning this article, I phoned two other folks from the podcast community – one to make sure he was ok as I hadn’t heard from him for a little while and wanted to make sure all was well. The other, Paul Parkinson, I checked on to make sure he was still in the land of the living and hadn’t succumbed to the dreaded jet lag. They’ll do the same with me via Skype, email or phone. The personal nexus seems to be second nature.

I’ve heard one very vocal, often downright offensive well-known podcaster slate the ‘paliness’ of podcasting. Why? Isn’t that yet another difference to celebrate from brash, cold and impersonal mainstream radio?

The reach of one podcast or blog is incredible when tracing the listener–referrer–reader relationship.

Next time you listen to your favourite podcast, see if you’re guided to another site, band or podcast. You’ll be surprised at how many times you’re happy to act on the recommendation of someone you feel you know and trust.

The community angle of podcasting and blogging is perhaps more far-reaching than we can ever truly know. Look at the Clustermap spreads on those who provide such a feature, and you’ll see the power of proximity in podcasting.



Sweden's First Podcasting Organization

by Andy, host of the Polarbear Podcast

By mid September 2006, podcasting finally became a real issue in Sweden, when the podcasting group SweCasters was begun.

Sweden is often considered being a tech-savvy country, but for some reason podcasting hasn't taken off with the Swedish population. This is an issue that I found very disconcerting, so I decided to do something about it and founded a podcasting group whose purpose is to market podcasting in Sweden and be a resource to the media when it comes to podcasting.

My plan was to gather all people in Sweden who, in any way, were involved in podcasting, even if there weren't very many of them at the time, and to create a knowledge base that other parts of the society could use, whether they be the media, curious people or potential podcasters.

Today, one month after the introduction, SweCasters has reached 10 members. That may not seem like very many members, but it is pretty much the entire podcasting elite in Sweden at the moment, and the group has already created a buzz. National media such as newspapers and TV has taken use of the vast knowledge of podcasting that lies within the group, and so far, the plan seems to be working just fine.

What the group has also managed to do is develop the individual members' knowledge of podcasting thorough popular use of its forum, which is open not only to members but to everyone who wants to sign up. Thanks to this forum, people can post questions and comments and get answers very quickly, pretty much as in any other forum.

There is nothing innovative about podcasting groups in general, but from what we know, there are only a few countries in the world that can brag about having a national organization for podcasting as Sweden does with Swecasters.

For more information about the group, and membership applications, please visit www.swecasters.com and to discuss any given topic on the forum, www.swecasters.com/forum. You can also send your questions to info@swecasters.com

Andy

www.swecasters.com
www.polarbearpodcast.com



Mobile Podcasting –

Hype or Reality



By Monte Silver of Bamboo Mediacasting and Neil Dixon of Britcaster

The cellular telephone industry has repeatedly attempted to move popular consumer services to the mobile environment. Internet became mobile internet. TV became mobile TV. Despite the investment of billions of dollars in data networks, spectrum, devices, and marketing campaigns, very few services have been transferred successfully.

Yet digital music and podcasting prove that users will go to great lengths to make entertainment mobile by actively connecting a media device to a PC and transferring content that has been downloaded from the internet. But can podcasting become a cellular service enjoyed on handsets? Clearly, podcasting has certain attributes suitable for the mobile environment. First, it is an “on-the-go” experience. Second, enjoying audio content is not affected by the handset’s small display screen. Thus should a failure to ‘port’ be construed as conclusive evidence that users simply do not believe that the mobile phone is a media device? This article outlines the critical issues that must be addressed if podcasting is to see even minimal mobile mass-market penetration.

Given the handset’s small screen and the cumbersome browsing experience, how mobile users discover and receive podcasts will have a huge effect on the nature and success of the service. There are two alternative models for the delivery of content: network-based and client-based.

Network-based solutions such as WAP (for Wireless Application Protocol) offer podcast menus on the operator’s portal. Users locate the appropriate podcast, and then they initiate the download.

WAP has failed to appeal to the mass-market user, perhaps because the click-and-wait, menu-intense experience of mobile internet can be horrible. Few will have the patience to navigate countless menus to locate a podcast and then wait for the download of a large file to end (the ‘pull’ method) before a podcast can be heard.

Podcasts can also be streamed off a network. Here, however, in addition to the cumbersome issues of finding an appropriate podcast, the user’s experience depends on consistent and sufficient data transmission during the streaming. A user listening to a podcast while commuting by train will often lose coverage altogether during the journey. Securing bandwidth in peak hours or in congested areas is very difficult, thus streaming often can not deliver an acceptable level of service.

Whether downloaded or streamed, content obtained by 'pull' assumes that a user will regularly look for it, but this concept runs counter to the podcast model, which presents content to the listener through an RSS feed. The 'pull' model is also less user-friendly to the potential mass-market mobile user, who is not as familiar with the process of finding and downloading content as the current podcast user is. Thus, the user experience for a mobile-device user must be as good, if not better than the iPod experience in order for the mass-market consumer to accept it.

The client-based solution reduces the amount of time a user spends browsing and provides a more immediate, user-friendly experience. One solution, offered by Odeo, offers a catalogue list of available podcasts. The user scrolls down the list and selects one, which initiates a content delivery session. Content discovery is simplified, since the user does not have to browse through many networks in order to find a podcast. However, the same delay in listening occurs as before, since downloading occurs after the user selects a podcast to hear. In addition, the decisions have to be repeated every day the user wishes to listen.

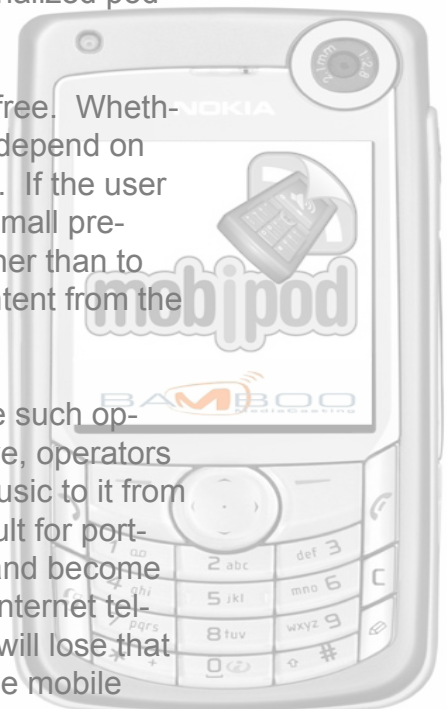
Another client-based solution is that offered by MobiPod (a collaboration between Bamboo Mediacasting and Britcaster), and it involves background download. Full-version video and audio podcast files can be delivered to the user automatically, for example, overnight. Fresh content can be available for immediate consumption for a morning commute, with no network access needed.

Two questions remain: Will users be willing to pay for mobile podcast services, and will providers actually want to launch anything but a bare-bones service for PR purposes?

Experience shows that people are clearly taking their entertainment with them. Also, working people have clearly definable windows of time, while commuting to and from work, during which they are a captive audience. Will the mass-market user, who is more likely to have a mobile phone than another portable media device, be willing to adopt and pay for a service that delivers personalized podcasts?

One barrier is the perception that podcasts are and should remain free. Whether users are willing to pay for podcasts on their mobile phones will depend on factors such as ease of use, quality of content, and price of service. If the user experience is easy, it is quite likely that people will prefer to pay a small premium in order to receive quality content on their mobile phones rather than to buy another portable media device and bother with transferring content from the computer to it daily.

One thing is certain: the mobile network operators are keen to have such operator-provided services succeed. First, from a revenue perspective, operators subsidize the handset yet see no revenue when a user transfers music to it from the PC. Second, if most users view iPod-like devices as their default for portable media consumption, the mobile handset will be marginalized and become used for voice only. As portable media players develop Skype-like internet telephone functionality over wireless systems, mobile phone devices will lose that niche as well. It is thus imperative for the network operators that the mobile phone claim a firm stake as a multi-function media device.



Mobile podcasting, however, poses a few challenges to the operator. First, mobile networks are inefficient in transmitting data, and the cost to the operator for this is high. While a user might pay 20 Euros a month for unlimited residential broadband access, the same user might be charged 1 Euro a megabyte for mobile data. Since the average 30-minute PC-based audio podcast is approximately 15 MB, the data transmission for one show can practically equal the monthly cost of a service through which a user can find podcasts and transfer them to a mobile device.

Mobile podcasting can be made more efficient. First, the size of podcasts can easily be reduced by simple content transcoding. A 30-minute podcast can be reduced to 1.5 MB, without affecting sound quality. Furthermore, the delivery frequency of a podcast service can be reduced. (Delivering shorter podcasts is an option, but top-rated podcasters will not create “mobile-versions” of their programs unless it makes economic sense.)

Second, the podcast files can be delivered during off-peak hours, ideally overnight. During peak hours and in congested areas, the cost of data delivery is at its highest, and delivery of large data files at this time will chill operator enthusiasm. Conversely, during off-peak hours, the network is empty, minimizing the cost of data transmission. Podcasts can be ‘pushed’ to users at scheduled off-peak times.

One final issue is that of billing and revenue. Mobile users will only adopt podcasting if the pricing structure is clear and reasonable. A monthly subscription fee for the service, without additional data charges, is mandatory. Operators can increase revenue, however, through the addition of advertisements, which can be easily included in podcasts, making the potential for additional revenue significant.

To summarize, several key factors must be considered if mobile podcasting is to be even marginally successful. Usability issues are of paramount importance. Early adopters may occasionally ‘pull’ content, but the mass-market will not. Rather, a client-based subscription ‘push’ model appears to be the most suitable, both in terms of user experience and network utilization. In addition, a clear charging model is mandatory for user acceptance. Finally, quality content, modified for the mobile experience, is important yet relatively easy to secure. Now it remains to be seen whether attractive services are deployed and enjoyed.

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Neil Dixon can be reached at neil.dixon@mac.com.



Mash 2

Proves that There Are No Barriers In Podcasting

Following the recent Podcasting & Portable Media Expo in California, Ewan Spence (TPN Rock) of The Podcast Network and CC Chapman (Accident Hash, U-Turn Cafe and Managing The Gray) of Podshow got together to produce a new episode of their popular cross-network, cross-continent 'Accident Mash' show. Grant Mason grabs a quick word with the co-hosts and finds out how it all came about.



How long have you two been friends?

Ewan: "CC and I go waaaay back; we've been friends since the very beginning of podcasting."

Whose idea was Accident Mash?

CC: "When we found out we were going to both be together in Germany Ewan came up with the idea of doing a show together."

Ewan: "It was one of my mad ideas; I have about twenty of them a day, and usually ten of them are sensible... Anyway, in a mad moment of inspiration I decided to throw the kit in a bag and record a music show with CC."

CC: "We really wanted to do a live recording where we could crank the tunes and do the show in front of a live audience, but our scheduling didn't make that work so we set up shop in one of our hotel rooms before leaving."

Ewan: "Exactly. And why did we do it? We did it because we both love music! It was also a great way of cross-promoting our two shows to new listeners, with the show firing down the feed on both pipes. It demonstrates how we as podcasters can all get on; despite the political infighting over networks, at the end of the day it's all about the music."

CC: "I love that we get to do this and people seem to react well. I think it's because Ewan and I are good friends and that comes through when we are together."

Ewan: "The reaction to the first show showed that it could be done and it could be a success, so we decided to do it again at the PME...."

CC: "But our schedules once again didn't hook up and once again we couldn't pull off the live event that we were hoping to do!"

Ewan: "Not letting that put us off, we managed to record the show in Scotland and Boston once we each got home – it was all done via Skype, some relay chat and the fact that we each recorded our own voice in the conversation at source and – with a little magic – mixed the individual recordings together. That allowed us to avoid the poor audio quality of Skype whilst still using it to talk to each other during the recording. Whilst the music was on we were able to talk about the track, what was coming up next and the like; probably just like real DJs actually do when they're together in a room!"

CC: "One of these days we'll get the live event with an audience working!"

You're planning on doing Accident Mash 3 at PodcastConUK 2006, aren't you?

Ewan: "We have plans to do it at PCCUK, but there's no firm plans as to where and when and how we're actually doing it! It'll come together, though."

And after that?

Ewan: "We have hopes of doing four or five a year at the big conventions".

That's right – you heard it here first, folks. Accident Mash is no accident at all – it's big, it's clever, it's fast, fun and fantastic and it could be coming to a conference or convention near you soon. You have been warned ! You have been especially seriously warned about the sight of Ewan's legs in a kilt... they're not for those of a nervous disposition.

Until then, check out Accident Mash 2 at

<http://rock.thepodcastnetwork.com/index.php?p=180>



Mark Hunter

Meeting up with podcasters is a great thing. Part of the joy in doing so involves not having to explain the simple things, like, say, what a podcast actually is. Or the importance of a rock-solid RSS feed. Or the joys of unmetered bandwidth.

I can honestly say that I enjoy spending time in a room full of podcasters so much that I'd happily spend money to do so. And on the 18th of November there will be a room full of such people in London attending PodcastCon 2006, each one of them having spent money to be there, ensconced in a nice venue among fellow podcasters.

But forget the debate around whether we should be calling the fruits of our creative labours 'podcasts' or 'netcasts'; much of the past few weeks has seen a furor and debate erupt around the £41.50 registration fee being charged by PodcastCon 2006's organisers.

The main thrust of the malcontent has been structured around the notion that for most of us, podcasting is a mere hobby. Therefore, because it's a hobby, and as such doesn't put money in our pockets, we shouldn't be expected to pay £41.50 (about \$80) to attend a hobbyist's conference.

But here's my take. OK, most of us are hobbyists, but as with the majority of hobbies, there are times when we need to spend our hard-earned cash in the pursuit of said hobby. And hey, why not treat yourself now and again? The £41.50 registration fee includes lunch, tea and coffee in the morning and afternoon, live music and the chance to hear some of the most experienced podcasters in the country discuss marketing, creative podcasting, turning your hobby into a business and the role of podcasters as citizen journalists.

Bargain!

Check out Mark's new blog about podcasting.

www.tartanstories.com



A Different Way of Listening.

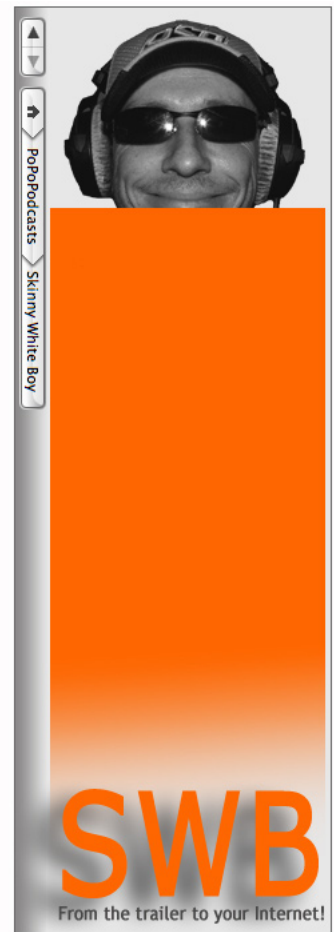
by Skinny White Boy

Imagine you are walking through a forest. What do you hear? The wind blows through the trees. Somewhere you hear crickets. A bird flies by, pushing air away with its wings. Somehow that becomes a sound and reaches your ear. Another bird sits in a tree and chirps. The blanket of tranquility is total. You become part of the landscape created by all these sounds by crushing autumn leaves under your feet.

What you are hearing is a cohesive set of sounds. While all completely different, they belong together. Any of the individual sounds will not have the same relaxing effect on you, even if you walk to the edge of the forest and get closer to “civilization”. In the distance a car rushes by. You curse the driver for disturbing your peace. That sound doesn’t belong in your aural landscape! But as out of place as it is, it also enforces the beauty of your experience. In a way, that car is part of your landscape, enhancing the beauty by only existing briefly, and making you, once more, appreciate your surroundings.

What you hear travels in sets of loosely related sounds. There is no one sound that makes an experience. The sounds are cohesive, without trying to be. Bird, cricket, tree, wind, footsteps. Together they make forest. Hot dog-vendor, ambulance, cell phone, public bus. Together they make city.

When mechanically creating sound, as we do when we create a podcast, we have to work on creating this cohesion. What works together, what doesn’t? Why do random sounds in nature (or suburbia) work together, and can we establish the same interaction in a podcast? I am up for the challenge! This should be interesting...



Skinny White Boy
<http://skinnywhiteboy.kastpod.org>

Google™ Breeds a Reader



I've spoken a lot about the perfect podcast aggregator, or podcatcher as they are more affectionately known. Always at the top of my wish list is the ability to have access to my subscriptions from anywhere, so I can see what's new and knock them off the list as they are listened to. There are many PC, Mac and Pocket PC-based podcatchers, but where they all have their stand-out features, none of them has this ability. That was until Google Reader.

Google Reader has been around for a while. It originally started out and is probably better known as an RSS aggregator, giving the ability to keep up to date with the latest news on the Internet. Recently, however, they've added the ability to subscribe and listen to podcasts, all from within the browser. This new ability was on the cards, as you've been able to listen to MP3s received as attachments in your Gmail account, using a little Flash player that was automatically inserted in the email with the attachment. It was a logical extension to add this to Google Reader, and it's something that changes the whole nature of this aggregator.

The first thing I did with Google Reader was to import my existing Juice subscriptions. This was relatively easy, as Juice allowed me to export my subscriptions in the de facto OPML format. Google Reader is also able to handle OPML files, so after uploading my subscriptions to Google Reader, within a short time, my subscriptions were all accessible in front of me. The final step I had to do was re-categorize my subscriptions. I have a variety of podcasts, vidcasts and RSS feeds, and it's nice to be able to view each of the groups at the touch of a button.

One of the only bug-bears about using a web based aggregator is that you have to always have the browser open. That in itself isn't a huge pain, but it begins to get a little tricky when you have many Gmail accounts and you want to check your email on them. It's easy to check the other accounts, but if you want to continue sifting through your podcasts, you have to ensure you log back into the account you use for your podcasts. I mainly use Firefox as my browser, so I circumvent these problems by using Internet Explorer for Google Reader and Firefox for everything else. You might also want to investigate an application called Netjager Desktop, which not only allows you to create shortcuts to websites but also allows you to minimize the launched website to your system tray. I've been using this in conjunction with Google Reader for a few weeks, and it's been working very nicely for me.

Colin Meeks

I've managed to trim back my podcast subscriptions of late, to around 60, and have so far had problems with only a couple using Google Reader. For example, whilst one side of the screen showed me I had podcasts not yet listened to, when I clicked a show with unread items, it showed all podcasts for that show as read. No big deal, as you can see all read podcasts, and the unread items are usually going to be at the top of the list. This can, however, be a pain, but it's something I'm prepared to accept, given the benefits Google Reader gives me. A couple of the other problems has been with the Dr Karl podcast, which for some strange reason (probably something to do with the audio compression) plays at nearly double speed. I've also had some problems with the Vobes show, seemingly ending in mid show. I haven't had the time to tell whether this was just Richard having a problem with the show he'd uploaded, or whether Google Reader had a problem determining the show length. Of all my podcasts only two of them are in Apple's MP4 format, so consequently they will not play in Google Reader. It will be interesting to see if Google manages to find a solution to this.

In conclusion, I have to say Google Reader has impressed the pants off me. I've been using it for a few weeks, and apart from the odd glitch, it's been a joy to use. In fact I've been so impressed, I no longer use Juice or Winpodder. I have access to my podcasts no matter where I am, on no matter what operating system I'm using at that time. The only thing that would be nice to have is some kind of software that allows me to synchronize to my Pocket PC so that I could be able to listen to selected podcasts and read news offline. Then, when I next synchronize, it updates the status of my podcasts and news. That's not much to ask? Is it?

Google Reader - <http://reader.google.com>

GMail - <http://www.gmail.com>

Netjaxer Desktop - <http://www.netjaxer.com>

Juice - <http://www.juicereceiver.com>

WinPodder - <http://www.winpodder.com>

Dr Karl - <http://www.abc.net.au/science/k2/stn/podcast.htm>

Podcast User Magazine

All items [show only new] - Mark all as read - Refresh	
☆ Podcast User Magazine Issue #9 - Podcast User Magazine issue n...	
☆ Coming in Podcast User Magazine Issue #9 - This month's bumper p...	
☆ Competition Winners - We had an excellent	
☆ Podcast User Magazine Issue #8 - Podcast	
☆ Server Problems Resolved - Our server proble	
☆ Podcast User Magazine Promocast for Issue	
☆ Server Problems - We are currently having pr	
☆ Podcast User Magazine Issue #7 - Podcast	
☆ Podcast User Magazine Promo Podcast for	

Indie Launchpad	
All items [show only new] - Mark all as read - Refresh	
☆ EP - You Are My Sister - Antony and the Johnsons - Band / Artist :	
☆ Album - Making Up Time - Candy Butchers - Band / Artist : Candy f	
☆ Album - Eleven Through Fifteen - Chance - Band / Artist : Chance -	
☆ Album - Flower and the Fall - Stanley Lucas Revolution - Band /	
☆ Album - Stardate Unknown - The Vulcan Freedom Fighters - Band	
☆ Album - Better Days - The Perms - Band / Artist : Th	
- VOBES -	
☆ Album - Stay - The Brightwings - Band / Artist : The	
☆ Album - Slow Motion Reign - Slow Motion Reign -	
☆ IL : System Note - Hi all. Just to let you know, Indie L	
☆ Album - Polaradio - Polaradio - Band / Artist : Pola	
☆ Album - Jon Crosse - Kind of Pink and Blue - Band / A	
☆ Album - Milk - Milk - Band / Artist : Milk - mySpaceGe	

All items [show only new] - Mark all as read - Refresh	
☆ VOBES - No. 617 - The Beer Show with Jimmym!	
☆ VOBES - No. 616 - The Vobes Fitness!	
☆ VOBES - No. 615 - Clean your teeth!	
☆ VOBES - No. 614 - Smoking and your health!	
☆ VOBES - No. 613 - Its Monday and another week of stuff fric	
☆ VOBES - No. 612 - Drinking Alone!	
☆ VOBES - No. 611 - He's back! The mad magician is in the s	
☆ VOBES - No. 610 - Who has replaced the stolen rare eggs?	
☆ VOBES - No. 609 - Boy of 14 reels in a piranhal	
☆ VOBES - No. 608 - GP surgery could be a matter of routine	
☆ VOBES - No. 607 - The Weekend Special with Paul Stonen	
☆ VOBES - No. 606 - How do you eat your dinner?	

Why I love the Daily Format!

(Or how to get to 600 shows without really trying!)



www.vobes.com

by Richard Vobes

Six hundred thirty-minute podcast shows – can that really be right? Is that too many? And who has the time to listen to so much material?

Well actually, it's more. There are over 600 Vobes Shows (at www.vobes.com) and a further 241 Naked Englishman shows (www.nakedenglishman.co.uk), making a grand total of 841 podcasts that I have produced, and the figure is climbing every day. By the time this magazine reaches publication, we shall be getting on towards 900.

Does that make me any better than someone who produces only three or four podcasts? No, of course not. My podcasts are drivel, rants and raves. I have outrageous, inconsistent opinion and hard-to-figure logic. I also put myself on the line and reveal very honest and humble truths about my life, my worries and insecurities. For me podcasting has become a way of life since January 2005, when we launched with our tentative first podcast venture. It may be nonsense, but it's very important to me.

I have been writing for PUM for the last few months about technical aspects of setting up a studio, but I wanted to write from a more personal perspective in this issue. I also wanted to explain why I continue to produce a prolific amount of shows.

There are two schools of thought with podcasting. Probably more than two, to be honest, possibly as many strands of cognitive brain power as there are MP3 files on the net! I identify my two, however, as follows: The factoid, stand-alone show that can stand the test of time and quite happily remain on a server and be listened to by one and all from now until the end of podcasting; the other, the transitory, tentative and 'current' type of format that has a limited shelf life and that may be listened to within a week before becoming so out of date that it has no relevance to man or beast.

The Vobes shows, all of them, are lumped into the latter category. I like to think of my show as a loaf of freshly baked bread, to be consumed on the day of purchase. If you don't fancy bread today, it doesn't matter, there is another one tomorrow, and the next day, and the next, and so forth.

But why do so many?

I am often told that podcasting isn't the same as 'radio'. By that I am assuming people mean live broadcasting, and to an extent, that is perfectly true. The nature of podcasting is that it can be downloaded after the show has been recorded and uploaded to a server and then listened to at will at a time convenient to its audience. But that said, people are of habit, and many download stuff at the same time each day and develop regular listening patterns. These may be different from the broadcasters' scheduled timetables, but humans are repetitive and habitual creatures. It follows, to my warped logic, that a commuter, for example, sitting on the train to work each day, may well enjoy a daily dollop of an ongoing personal saga to brighten his or her morning, afternoon or whatever.

The next generation, the impetuous youth, are of course being brought up on this technology now as a matter of routine, just as I was on the wireless and later the transistor radio. I argue, it is they who will treat this podcasting, downloading, time-shifted medium as 'radio', and therefore a daily show is not such a strange concept.

For me, though, podcasting is freedom. I am an entertainer and one that has been knocking on the doors of professional broadcasters for many years, like so many, and discovering there isn't always enough room at the inn or opportunities in the 'pro' world, especially for my kind of show.

I offer humour, rants, egotistical behavior and comments on the news of the day. I also dish out highly personal and intimate confessions of my private life for all to hear and realise just how better off they are than me!

I don't think being prolific makes me any better at podcasting than the next man or woman. It's just a format. It is not without its demands and disciplines, however, and there I do believe I do score points.

For me, having a regular timetable for a podcast is important. People, I believe, do like to know when they can expect a new podcast to be published, and I would urge any one putting their content up for all to subscribe to, to really make an effort to produce something on a regular basis. That might be once a week, twice a month or every other day. Many hobbyist podcasters try to emulate the professionals by attention to detail, marvelous production, super editing and recording quality and then erratically upload on the as-and-when basis. I don't think that is fair on the listeners, but then, that's just me. My listeners don't get much choice – there is a show Monday to Friday and on occasions a special weekend show, too, and usually I upload the bloody thing by 9am UK time!

As I say, it's fresh baked bread, so you got to enjoy while it's still warm!

<http://www.vobes.com/naked/naked1.htm>



The Pickle

talks to



When and why did you create Podcast Pickle and who's behind it?

We started working on The Pickle in December of 2004. The main staff now consist of myself, and three techs Jeff Story, Brady Cash and Trey Woods. At the time we were building and running about E Commerce sites. When I read about podcasting it appealed to me right away. I believe I read about Podcasting one day and 3 days later we started on Podcast Pickle.

What were your original objectives; have they been met or adapted by time?

That is a hard question for me. I really did not have a real objective, except to build a great site. I am a big if you build it; they will come type of guy.

If you started again, knowing what you know, would you have done anything different?

Maybe some minor things, but all in all it would be pretty much the same.



You talk of a community. How much does feedback play in the overall development of The Pickle?

We use a lot of feedback. Many of the features on Podcast Pickle were given to us by our forum community. Pickle Wars, Pickle News, and Pickle Players are just a few of them. We are now creating Podcasting Tree from the community's requests. I think that is why we have such an active community. We are involved and actually are podcasters.

Do you see greater future in Vidcasts now that the major manufacturers are developing better players, and will podcasts diminish because of it?

I think Vidcasts will be the big player someday, but I always think there will be a place for podcasts.



www.podcastpickle.com
www.sportpodcasts.com
www.churchpodcasts.com
www.scifipods.com
www.picklemobile.com
www.PicklesPodcastNews.com

PODCAST CULTURE - MADE BY PODCASTERS

by Dean Whitbread

With newspapers using podcasting to occupy broadcast territory and seizing their chance to use the internet to reverse their falling readership and declining advertising revenue, and with broadcasters following the internet example set by the BBC, moving ever more confidently into on-demand content, there is a growing interest from the commercial sector in podcasting; but while Ricky Gervais, Baddeil and Skinner, Chris Moyle may be the household names which the general British public associates with podcasts (or not!), there exists a distinctive and established podcast culture out there, which stands out markedly from traditional offerings.

Typically low-budget, relatively low-tech, podcast content is sometimes derided as shoddy, said to inhabit geek niches, and to be entirely irrelevant to your average viewer or listener, but this is far from the truth.

Most podcasts, in fact, are made by untrained people, speaking in their own voices, without editorial interference, and although they may not appear in the iTunes top ten, these non-commercial podcasts make up the vast majority of podcast culture.

Podcast producers tend to operate locally, and they work comfortably within content niches, from situations that television and radio cannot reach. But that being said, a lot of podcasts conform to normal program-making rules, and generally production standards are high, especially in the UK.

The widespread appeal of this home-produced is precisely that it is by and large stripped of the excess packaging and mindless repetition that weighs down television and radio and offers non-standardised content, uncensored views and unique perspectives... and because it's being self-produced and largely un-edited, it often has a freshness and a naturalness that is missing from corporately derived content.

We first saw the attraction of this sort of content in Britain in the successful and influential BBC series,



Dean Whitbread © 2006

Video Nation, born in 1993, where people were given support to make their own short videos.

Video Nation came from a Community Programmes initiative and distributed cameras in homes across Britain for filming everyday lives. The Guardian said of the first series,

“The immediacy of these programmes is entirely different to anything shot by a crew. There seems to be nothing between you, not even the glass...”

This immediacy came as a blast of fresh air, and it has been a significant driver of audio-visual culture since that time. The result was many awards and a format that was extended and widely copied.

Podcasting is full of the kind of home-produced priceless gems that Video Nation gave us, and its appeal is precisely that it often gives us a more real version of reality than TV or radio can offer.

As J.G. Ballard said,

“There’s been a huge surge in popularity of so-called Reality TV shows. I think this reflects a tremendous hunger among people for “reality” - for ordinary reality.

IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO FIND THE 'REAL' because the environment is totally manufactured. Even one's own home is a kind of anthology of advertisers, manufacturers, motifs and presentation techniques... we're living inside commercials. I think people realise this, and they're desperate for reality..." *

I think it is no accident that this upsurge in dis-intermediated culture - where the middleman of broadcaster or publisher has been removed - comes at a time when tabloid-driven reality TV is becoming stylised, garish and spiteful in order to maintain its audience.

UK PODCASTER COMMUNITY

Most of the 250 or so independent UK podcasters consider themselves program makers. Yet, among podcasters as much as podcast users, there is a recognition across the board that podcast culture, as made by podcasters, is quite different from podcasts which are merely extensions of conventional broadcast or publishing into the medium. Repurposed TV or radio programs are especially deemed not to be REAL podcasts, and music programs with the music removed are a prime example of mainstream media insanity, as far as they are concerned. This generalisation represents a fairly typical attitude, but it is an attitude that stems from knowledge about the breadth, depth and variety of podcasting, rather than from ignorance.

Podcasting is less than two years old, and among the early adopters, there is a certain amount of peer pressure; but this pressure is mainly non-conformist - in other words, the desire is to remain original and not to ape the out-dated structures of the old media, which are seen by the most passionate proponents of the new medium to have practically exhausted themselves and to be blindly stuck in a self-serving, dead-end loop.

So, morale among podcasters is high, and there is a lot of insight by practitioners about their practice. Nonetheless, podcasters do aspire to achieve the audiences that traditional media enjoy, and this effectively creates an environment of competitive invention and generally drives standards higher.

Conrad Slater is a video podcaster, from Spainful Films, who has produced many hours of character-based scripted comedy; this is part of Conrad's response in a forum to a certain hard-working podcaster who started to adopt some traditional radio formats for his show in his search for a bigger audience, a move that attracted a certain amount of derision in the podcast community. Conrad explained the psychology and went on to illuminate the appeal of the alternative approach:

What has made podcasting so popular (he says) has been honesty. Honesty often at the expense of ego which challenges all previous media that has gone before it; the packaged and prepared DJ radio voice, the hidden agendas and political bias of news media, and an otherwise marketing driven corporate sponsored popular culture.

With no financial incentive but driven by a desire simply to communicate honestly, podcasters, at their best have created compelling content that at times successfully showcased a genuine indifference to personal validation or success and instead have been honest, human personal records chronically ones self at any given time.

And it is these shows that I personally like as do many other listeners.

Most podcasters are not frustrated just because they don't have a radio or television transmitter, since podcast audiences are growing fast. And in fact, several UKPA podcasters simultaneously make content for broadcast.

Founder-member "Podcast" Paul Nicholls will this month podcast for the BBC from Swaziland, Markkettiers4DC makes brand-sponsored podcasts (for example, for Vodafone) alongside conventional radio and TV. In 2006, my own work with John Cleese led to my company Funk, producing content destined for radio and television and using podcasting to get it there.

So we are entering the phase where as traditional industries start to use podcasting, podcast culture as made by podcasters starts to feed back into and change these industries.

The new podcast industry is vibrant and energetic. There are over 60,000 podcasts out there, and there is a podcast audience population of many millions worldwide. New businesses are being built up on the basis of podcast activity - Podbridge, PodTrac, Kiptronic, Feedburner - all with their sights set on capturing the advertising revenue from podcasts. Venture capitalists are providing millions to fuel the commercialisation of podcasting - Adam Curry's PodShow announced recently that it's just received another 15 million dollars.

Feedburner.com: 68,465 podcasts including feeds with video reaching 5,105,602 aggregate subscribers (as of 9/26/06)

- and that's just one of several feed providing services.

But this commercial drive stems from a real internet phenomenon - the social web, of which podcasting is a major strand - and it's all based on the unpaid activities of many thousands of enthusiasts who are putting out thousands of hours a week of programming, innovating with formats and technology and constructing new business models as they significantly develop this new industry.

The UK is at the hub of global podcasting. There is a lot of grassroots energy in this country, and there are several hives of community activity which attract the more gregarious podcasters, with regular meet-ups being organised across the country. This helps to create a self-informed, technology-, business- and culture-savvy community that directly affects podcasting, and it is influencing its current shape and future direction.

The relatively easy availability of high-quality audio and video hardware combined with decently powerful personal computers and broadband is also fuelling this particular boom, and converging media standards across platforms makes interoperability the norm.

It would be entirely wrong to suggest that there isn't a lot of technical innovation going on in podcasting, containing as it does endless variations of format.

including enhanced podcasts, mobile podcasting, gaming, dating and so forth.

But it is because it uses RSS, the innovation that also powers blogs, that podcasting is changing society, by affecting personal content usage and by providing new options for personal content production, especially in the area of group collaborations.

RSS is essentially used by podcasters as an effective, low-cost means of international distribution; but it also fundamentally changes the one-to-many publishing / broadcast paradigm that we are all used to, because it is such a simple technology that it enables a whole new way of participating in culture.

RSS was identified by Tim O'Reilly in 2005 as a key component of Web 2.0, and Tim makes the point that this is not just a technical change but also offers a new business model. He says,

The world of Web 2.0 is also the world of what Dan Gillmor calls "we, the media," a world in which "the former audience", not a few people in a back room, decides what's important.
<http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html?page=1>

Brian Greene, from Doop Design, founder of PodRepBod, the Irish equivalent to UKPA, says:

"As a podcaster with a decent-sized audience, people do ask me, how many people listen to my podcast. But it's not about how many people listen to my podcast; it's about how many podcasts I can listen to..."

This understanding really does show up the difference between podcasters who perceive the medium holistically and podcasters who think it is just another branch of their particular industry. As a podcaster, you are not operating in a vacuum; you are not apart from your audience; you are in the middle of, and adding to, an ongoing many-threaded conversation.

Podcasting, powered by RSS, evolves content production into a many-to-many, dialogue / commentary / community-based paradigm,

where the producer is also a consumer, and we can see this working in the way podcasters cooperate, aggregate and combine their feeds.

For example, the Britcaster site is a website which does two things: it combines feeds from a group of UK podcasters into one, and it provides a podcast community forum.

The benefits are that the podcast audiences grow as people subscribe to the combined feed and find new programs they like. In the forum, podcasters share skills, give production and technical tips, solve problems, argue pros and cons, and alert one another to pitfalls and scams. Britcaster has also been the place where several new social and business organisations have found form, including the UKPA and the annual PodCastCon.

So, this kind of collective podcasting allows an organic sharing of experience, and it provides a straightforward way to combine multiple intelligences; and this creates a hothouse for development very effectively. Good ideas are born and flourish, bad ideas shot to pieces and dropped. RSS allows national and international enterprises to be enabled overnight and cuts the development curve of a new idea down from months to weeks, or even days.

UKPA - BEST OF BRITISH PODCASTING

Whether they produce their shows commercially or privately, most podcasters tend not to employ excessive production tricks, clever editing or special effects, but instead rely on original turns of phrase, quirky accents, insight, ambient noise and genuine passion to make their shows authentic and compelling.

And this approach seems to work. UK podcasters punch far above their weight in terms of audience numbers - podcasting is something we Brits seem to be very good at.

Within the UKPA, we are involved in every aspect of podcast creation and production, including audio, video, film-making, live performance, citizen journalism, websites of every flavour, search, hosting and traditional format magazines.

Within that astonishingly broad range of production activities, topics vary from comedy to cold-calling, photography to football, poetry to pornography, technology to travel,

knitting to nightlife. And of course, there's a huge amount of music - artists, labels, managers, promoters and retailers, all selling music via podcasting, the vast majority using legitimately licensed material outside the mainstream.

SUMMARY

Everybody I meet who is involved in media has a different take on podcasting. I've heard it described as radio, publishing, web tv, journalism... usually by people working in these established industries, but in reality, it's none of these.

Given that podcasting is following the blogging pattern, using the same technology, and looking at the huge success of sites that allow the easy sharing of user-generated content, such as YouTube and MySpace, and the coming of sites such as BT PodShow to the UK, we can see that podcasting is likely to affect in a major way broadcast media in the very near future. But alongside the obvious changes, something much more subtle and far-reaching will be happening.

If blogging is about the collective mind, the chattering echo chamber, moderated and filtered by collective intelligence, then podcasting is about the collective voice.

Podcasters make content for each other as much as for you out there; and the distance from the outside to the inside is growing ever smaller.

Andy Warhol's famous quote, "In the future everyone will be famous for 15 minutes" came true - he was talking about the cult of celebrity, the victory of the superficial, the "homogenised self-imitating landscape of programs where nothing new ever really appears."

But now, if I can quote JG Ballard once again, our modern-day HG Wells, with the public starting to despair, switch off, and look for alternatives, JG Ballard's future prediction seems much more relevant:

"In the future, everyone will be living inside their own TV studio." *

Podcasting will be a key part of this; and now that podcasting is on school curriculae, we can expect to see further uptake and more daring and diverse uses of podcasting than we have so far dreamed.

The quirky Podcast List

Each month we'll be looking for suggestions for the most unusual or 'out of the norm' podcast to join our list. Send your suggestions to:

submissions@podcastusermagazine.com

Unnatural Acts of Opera

http://parterre.com/unnatural_acts_archive.php

Parterre box, the queer opera zine, presents extraordinary opera performances, one act at a time. Your hostess is La Cieca, cultural doyenne of parterre box.

If I Can You Can

<http://canningusa.com>

Ten to twelve minute instructions for each home canning method. The first being the easiest, beginning with jam and infused fruit, moving into the second which teaches how to preserve fruit in syrup and how to can homemade pie filling. In July, when tomatoes are ripe, we'll teach how to can those delicious, ripe and red summer tomatoes whole, diced or in your favorite tomato sauce!

Just Vocabulary's Podcast

<http://www.justvocabulary.libsyn.com>

A daily podcast (approx 3-4 min) where I introduce two English words, explain, and use the words in example sentences. And there is a weekly recap on the 10 words of this week. Monday through Friday I introduce new words like adamant, erroneous, insipid, lethargy, etc, and on Saturday I review last weeks' words. It is just vocabulary, no chitchat, to the point, short and powerful.

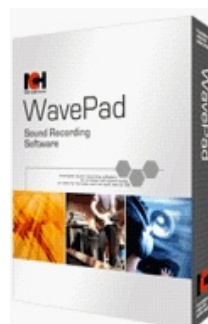
Victoria and Albert Museum

<http://www.everyobject.net>

Curators, conservators and researchers share some of their stories of artworks in the Paintings Gallery of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London as part of the Every Object Tells A Story project.



<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>



Note : some features in WavePad are time limited until a licence is purchased.

www.nch.com.au/wavepad/masters.html

SUBMISSIONS

We here at PUM welcome letters and suggestions and also invite submissions for inclusion in the magazine.

If you have a story to tell, an insight or even advice for the podcaster or listener why not email it now at:

submissions@podcastusermagazine.com

ADVERTISERS

PUM are prepared to take a limited amount of advertising. For our rate card please email:

help@podcastusermagazine.com

Podcast User Magazine

invites and encourages submissions from all regarding podcasting. Any opinions on any subjects expressed by the co-founders or contributors in their podcasts are theirs alone and do not reflect the editorial opinion of the magazine.



Podcast User Magazine
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for productive podcasters and discerning listeners

<http://www.podcastusermagazine.com>

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STOP PRESS



Brian Ibbott, winner of the 2005 Peoples Choice Best Music Podcast, today joins The Podcast Network with his daily entertainment show, "Today in Music History." "Brian was one of the first podcasters to make a truly great music show with 'Coverville,'" enthuses Ewan Spence, Executive Director and Head of Music at The Podcast Network. "He still is a genuine trail-blazer, and to bring this unique and exciting show, and its host, to the Network has long been a personal goal. I can't wait for our listener's reaction to the news."

And there's more . . .

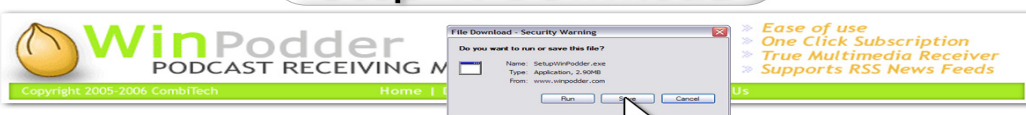
Iain Foulds, the man behind the Unsigned Rock Podcast, is the latest signing to The Podcast Network. Taking the chair to host the Monday and Thursday shows on the TPN Rock show, Foulds brings a strong following from his previous show of audience and bands

<http://www.thepodcastnetwork.com>

INSTRUCTIONS:

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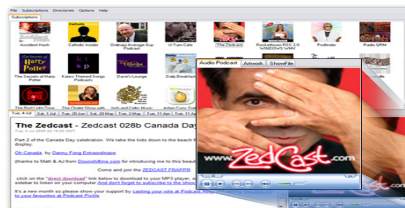
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